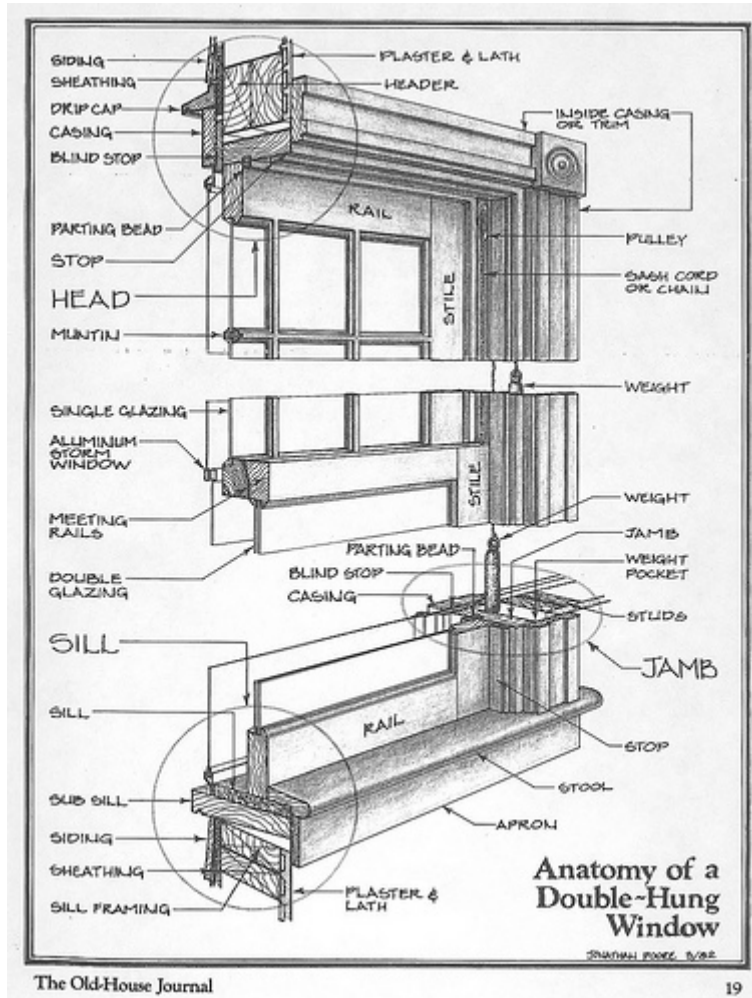


Wood Window Tip Sheet

Windows last longer if they are protected with paint but do not paint the sash canals, hardware or sash cords or windows will stick. The tight-grained old growth wood that old windows are fabricated from will last decades longer than much softer grained new wood used for modern windows.



My old windows are drafty. What do I do?

Where is the draft coming from? To pinpoint these areas, try running a lit candle or incense around the window on a breezy day. More than likely, air is coming in around the sashes or through the wall around the window. Try weatherstripping the window, caulking around the window and installing a storm window especially during the winter months.

Glazing putty is your friend. If large chunks are missing or cracked, drafts will occur. Learning how to glaze is simple even for most do-it-yourselfers or find a friend to help.

If I install new windows, it will save me tons of money.

False – Quality replacement windows are a significant investment. Installing a storm window over an existing window could pay you back in 4.5 years by itself. Replacement of a storm window and your wood window with a Low-e glass double-pane thermal replacement will not pay you back for 240 years.

All my heat is going out my old drafty windows.

False – Heat rises so you are losing more heat out your roof. Think of it this way, you are going outside on a cold winter day; if you put a hat on your head you will be warmer. Adding just 3 ½ inches of insulation in your attic will save more money than new windows.

Replacement windows are maintenance free.

False – There is no such thing as maintenance-free item. Replacement windows are called just that – replacement windows – because you are going to have to replace them in a few years. You can not fix most new windows so when it breaks you have to buy a new one. A historic wood window can be fixed over again and again when something breaks so they stay out of the landfill.

New vinyl PVC windows will last longer than the old wood windows.

False – Historic wood windows can last 100+ years if properly cared for in your house. We have no idea really how long vinyl windows will last as most vinyl windows are replaced within 10-15 years because of failure and will last forever in the landfill.

There is no one out there that repairs windows.

False – There are window repair people all over the country who you can hire to help you out. Talk to SHPO or ask around to other historic homeowners. Remember these folks are specialists and craftspeople and they are not free.

The window salesman or contractor says I need new windows.

No, you do not. A window salesman is just that – a salesman trying to get you to buy his products. And a contractor may have no experience fixing old windows but knows how to install new ones.

I have to have double-pane windows to be energy efficient.

False – The addition of a storm window to an existing wood window is virtually equal to a new double-paned window. Add proper weatherstripping to your old windows can increase your window's efficiency by as much as 50 percent.

I care about the environment, don't new windows save energy?

Yes and no – If your old windows (which have embodied energy) go in the landfill, you install new windows and in 10 years you have to replace them so those windows go in the landfill, you haven't saved anything.